United **4** Smart Sustainable Cities

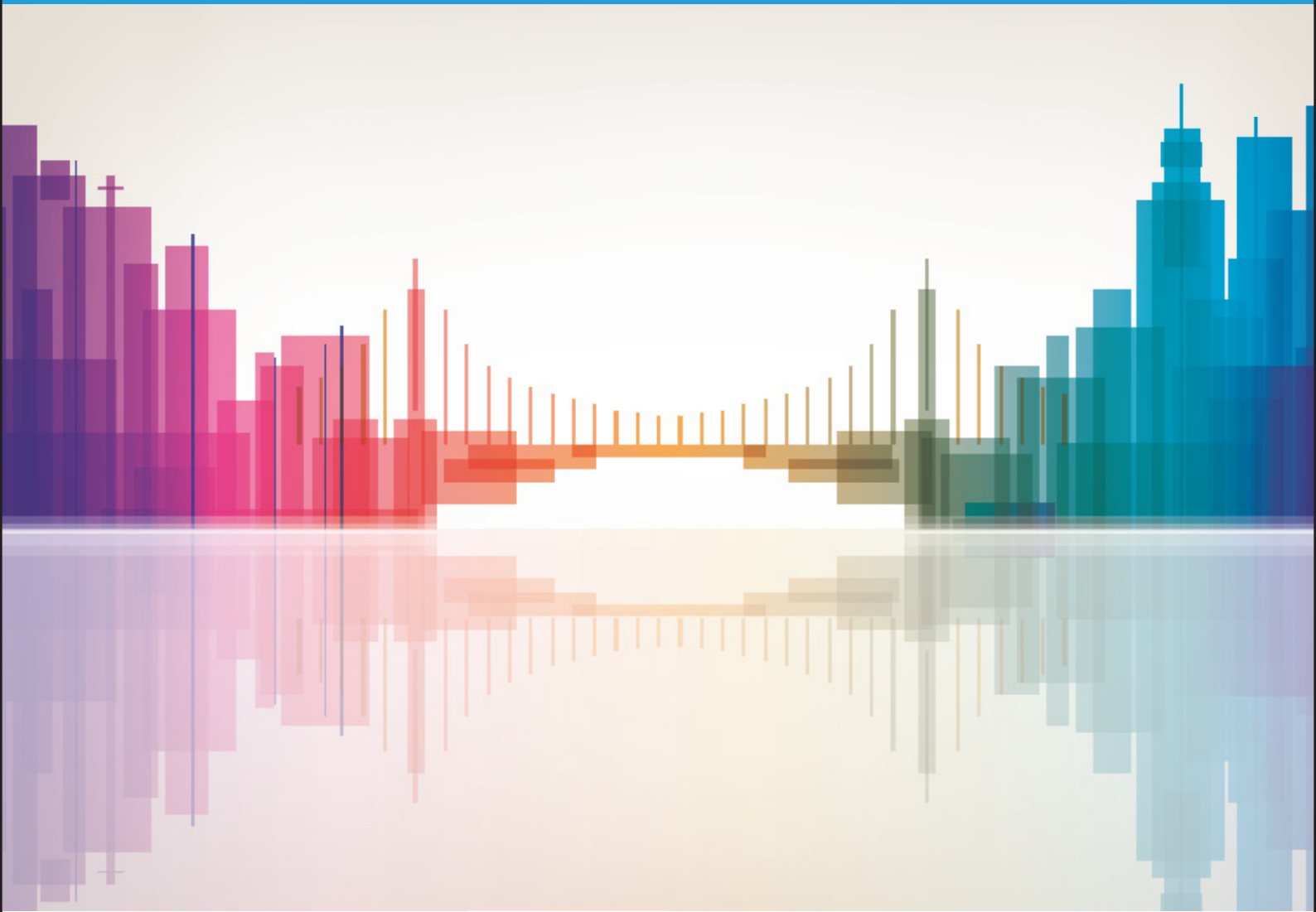# Key performance indicators: A key element for cities wishing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

ITU

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Foreword

This publication has been developed by ITU within the framework of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative and presents the ITU's approach on how to implement the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Overview

This publication provides information on the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) project. The U4SSC serves as the global platform to advocate for public policy and to encourage the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital technologies to facilitate and ease the transition to smart sustainable cities.

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About United for Smart Sustainable Cities

United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) is a United Nations initiative coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNECE and UN-Habitat, and supported by CBD, ECLAC, FAO, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UN Environment, UNEP-FI, UNFCCC, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNU-EGOV, UN-Women and WMO to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

U4SSC serves as the global platform to advocate for public policy and to encourage the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate and ease the transition to smart sustainable cities. Find out more...

Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals

U4SSC has developed the key performance indicators (KPIs) for Smart Sustainable Cities (SSC) to support cities worldwide in evaluating the role and contribution of ICTs and digital technologies in enabling smart sustainable cities, and to provide cities with the tools for self-assessment with the objective of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The U4SSC KPIs are a United Nations standard on smart sustainable cities, which was developed by the ITU and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 2015 together with other 14 UN bodies.

What is a Smart Sustainable City?

"A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects."

Source: Recommendation ITU-T Y.4900/L.1600 (2016) *"Overview of key performance indicators in smart sustainable cities"*.

U4SSC Key Performance Indicators project

A consistent and standardized method for cities to collect the necessary data to measure performance and progress

The U4SSC KPIs are developed based on Recommendation ITU-T Y.4903/L.1603 "Key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities to assess the achievement of sustainable development goals".

These indicators have been developed to provide cities with a consistent and standardized method to collect the necessary data to measure performance and progress towards:

- achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

- becoming a smarter city; and

- becoming a more sustainable city.

How do the U4SSC key performance indicators work?

An innovative approach

The U4SSC KPIs consist of 91 indicators. Each indicator forms part of a comprehensive view of a city's performance in three dimensions: **Economy**, **Environment** and **Society and Culture**. Each of these dimensions provides a separate view of progress, and when reported together, they provide a holistic view of a smart sustainable city.

By providing a common set of metrics to benchmark a city's performance, the indicators also enable cities to compare their performance to that of other cities, allowing for the dissemination of best practices and setting the standards for progression in meeting the SDGs. Find out more…

Send us your questions!

The list of all the U4SSC KPIs along with the collection methodology are contained in the:

"Collection Methodology for Key Performance Indicators for Smart Sustainable Cities".

Over 100 cities worldwide are already implementing the U4SSC KPIs, including Dubai, Singapore, Santa Fe, Moscow, Valencia, Pully and Bizerte, with many more aspiring smart cities interested in the initiative.

Contact the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat today to see what U4SSC can do for your city!

How can a city participate in the U4SSC KPIs project?

The first step to smartness and sustainability

To initiate the U4SSC KPIs project, the prospective city submits a letter of interest to the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat which provides secretarial support to cities in collecting the necessary data. A simple template of the letter of interest can be found in **Annex 2**. The Terms and Conditions that apply to the prospective city can be found in **Annex 1**.

ITU's implementation of the U4SSC KPIs project: Phases

The project consists of two phases:

Phase 1: Assessment and verification of the progress towards becoming an SSC

This phase includes the following:

- The U4SSC Secretariat provides the city with an Excel template that contains all the KPIs to be assessed.

- The city fills in the template with the information received from the various entities in their city.

- Once the information is provided to one of the responsible organizations, the verifier verifies the data provided by the city.

- Once the verification process has been completed, the verifier provides a Verification Report, which includes the following information:

  o verification results;

  o high-level policy recommendations; and

  o high-level suggestions for improvement opportunities.

In case the city requires assistance during the data collection process, the responsible organization will provide clarification on the KPIs. If needed, conference calls can also be organized with the verifier and the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat.

Verification process

To ensure transparency in the process, the verifier hired to perform the verification will be external to the ITU. In this regard, the city can decide on either of the following two options:

- **Onsite verification**: The city pays the verifier the agreed verification costs plus any related travel expenses (e.g. flight ticket, accommodation and per diem costs); or

- **Remote verification**: The city pays the verifier the agreed verification costs.

To learn more about the associated costs and expenses of this project, please contact the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.

Development of a City Factsheet, City Verification Report and City Snapshot

Cities can request the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat's assistance to develop a City Factsheet, which contains the outcomes and achievements from implementing the U4SSC KPIs in the participating city. It would highlight the city's smart initiatives and how they have helped the city in achieving the different targets set in the SDGs. It is the ideal tool to promote a city's smart strategy and to demonstrate its progress in reaching the SDGs.

While the recommended City Factsheet is optional, each participating city will receive its Verification Report (as mentioned previously) along with a City Snapshot. The Snapshot provides a visual overview of the city's performance based on global benchmarks.

To learn more about the costs and expenses associated with the development of the City Factsheet, or to learn more about the Verification Report and Snapshot, please contact the U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.

U4SSC certificate

Each participating city will receive an attestation from ITU upon completion of their U4SSC KPIs project, stating that they were successfully evaluated based on a UN standard.

Phase 2: Establishment of the U4SSC Smart Sustainable Cities Index.

All the cities involved in the project can participate in the establishment of the U4SSC Smart Sustainable Cities Index led by ITU. The U4SSC KPIs will form the basis for this Index. The Index will utilize the reported indicator values, along with the supporting data profiling each city, to provide a comparative ranking among a selection of cities.

Annex 1: Terms and Conditions that apply to the participating city

Qualifying attributes of the participating city

- The concerned city should have a keen interest in transitioning into a smart and sustainable city.

- The participating city should commit to contributing their inputs and lessons learnt from the project for the establishment of the U4SSC Smart Sustainable City Index.

Responsibilities of the participating city

- The participating city is required to collect and record the required information in the Excel template provided by the U4SSC Secretariat and to initiate the verification process with the verifier. Each city will be given 3-6 months to gather its data, including, if necessary, with the assistance of a qualified third-party consultant. The final date for submission of the data will be decided in agreement with the city, ITU and the verifier.

- Each city may decide whether they wish to have the verification conducted onsite or remotely.

- Participation in the project is funded by the city.

- The participating city is required to provide the travel and accommodation expenses for the mission to the site for one verifier (who shall be designated by the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat). These expenses are not included in the overall cost of the project for the city.

Responsibilities assumed by U4SSC Secretariat

- The ITU/U4SSC Secretariat is tasked with ensuring that each participating city is well informed about the processes conducted during the project.

- The ITU/U4SSC Secretariat is responsible for appointing a competent and accomplished verifier who can carry out the verification process.

- The ITU/U4SSC Secretariat is responsible for deciding on a suitable UN body staff member who can supervise the verification work carried out by the verifier.

Associated cost(s)

- To ensure transparency in the process, the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat will designate an external verifier.

- To learn more about the associated costs and expenses of this project, please contact the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat at: u4ssc@itu.int.

- As part of the verification process, the verifier will conduct a series of interviews and will produce a final City Verification Report.

Additional information

- The City Verification Report will only be published at the discretion of the participating city.

- Verifiers and the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat involved in the project are required to keep all the information associated with the project confidential.

- All the material published based on the project will be the intellectual property of the participating city and ITU.

Annex 2: Letter template to request participation in the U4SSC KPIs project

Subject: Participation in the U4SSC Key performance indicators (KPIs) project

Dear ITU/U4SSC Secretariat,

It is our pleasure to inform you that (CITY NAME) is interested in participating in the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) KPIs project.

(Please include a short paragraph on the city's vision of/current work on smart sustainable cities.)

We have carefully reviewed the U4SSC objectives and the collection methodology of the project. We are ready to collect data in accordance with the requirements of the U4SSC KPIs, undergo a verification of our data with an U4SSC approved verifier and submit the data to the ITU/U4SSC Secretariat.

We are pleased to inform you that the focal point for this activity is Mr./Ms. XXXX. We look forward to our participation in the project.

Kind regards,

(Name and signature of city leader / representative)